

# **IS THE GOSPEL STILL POWERFUL?**

**So why do we witness as if it  
isn't?**

**(so why do we not witness?)**

# **WEEPING AT 39,000 FEET**



**SUFFERING ASIANS-they  
believe the Gospel is still  
powerful and they witness**

# **' THINGS SPOKEN BY THE HEART ARE ONLY HEARD BY THE HEART'**

**Not an academic/theological lecture**

**No nit-picking please regarding minute  
details!**

# A HISTORY LESSON-Part 1

## LOSS OF HOLISTICNESS'-THE FACTS

50s & 60s people were 'souls to be won'  
evangelicals felt superior to 'liberals'

70s & 80s recovery of confidence in the  
Gospel-church growth era

90s and 00s discovery of the *transformation*  
principle-demonstration & proclamation

# A HISTORY LESSON-Part 1- cont.

The church went 'flat out' to recover the missing 'demonstration' element

Have we ended up with 'new liberalism'?

Have we neglected proclamation or worse-assumed that if we did good works somehow the Gospel 'magically' *would preach itself?*

# A HISTORY LESSON-part 2

HOW DID WE END UP WITH THAT  
THINKING/PRACTICE?

Doing good works is the *whole* biblical  
mandate?

After all Jesus said '*let your light shine  
before men that they may see your  
good works and praise your Father in  
heaven*' Mt. 5:16

# A HISTORY LESSON-part 2- cont.

- 'what an awesome thing it is to live at a time when Tajiks, Yemenis, Afghans, Mongolians, Cambodians...form such a fresh and thrilling part of the Body of Christ'
- 'but it is depressing to witness the church *in the West* struggling with in-fighting, petty squabbles, and, most disturbing, the bland tyranny of lukewarm Christianity'
- 'On the one hand we have Christians who value their faith so highly that they are willing to die for it, and on the other we have Christians who value their faith so poorly that they would rather heed the nonsensical whims of political correctness, than the commands of the Christ they profess to follow'

Go magazine October 2008

# WHAT ELSE HAS GONE WRONG?

- \* loss of confidence in the Gospel?  
heart and will loss, not doctrinal
- \* a fuzziness about who is lost and saved-subconscious pluralism?
- \* too much emphasis on internal church matters-Mission squeezed out
- \* God exists primarily to look after me

# REGAINING THE BALANCE OF DEMONSTRATION & PROCLAMATION-THEORY

'may we know him intimately, live like him  
practically and speak about him openly'

Phil Cole June 17 '08

- \*Evangelicalism always been noted for evangelism
- \*LEAF stands for discipling, unity, communication to society, transformation
- \*SOME SIMPLE THEOLOGY:-
  - 'I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some'
  - 'I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible' 1 Cor. 9:22 and 19
  - 'go and make disciples of all nations' Mt. 28:19

# **REGAINING THE BALANCE OF DEMONSTRATION & PROCLAMATION-PRACTICE**

**The Lord Jesus said 'the kingdom of  
heaven is near' Mt. 4:17**

**In reality it is only as near as we make  
it**

**In reality it is only as near as they  
experience it**

# THE GOSPEL WILL NOT 'MAGICALLY' PREACH ITSELF

'let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven' Mt 5:16

Must not take verse in isolation

We also need 'how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard'?

'how can they hear without someone *witnessing* to them?' Rom. 10:14

# THE GOSPEL WILL NOT 'MAGICALLY' PREACH ITSELF- cont.

'Christian Mission means being sent by Christ to live out the truth of his atoning sacrifice. And living out the truth means proclaiming it...to all people, at all times and in all places'

'There is no part of an obedient properly lived Christian life that is not proclaiming the Gospel directly. The Gospel that drives every thought and action cannot remain unspoken' Dr Stephen Holmes IDEA  
Jul/Aug 08

# THE GOSPEL WILL NOT 'MAGICALLY' PREACH ITSELF- cont

People are more comfortable doing  
jobs for Christ, but not witnessing

When we mix with non-believers while  
doing community things, while at  
leisure or at work, we need  
intentionality a Missional intent

Otherwise we are just 'nice people'

**THE GOSPEL WILL NOT  
'MAGICALLY' PREACH ITSELF-  
cont.**

## **POLITICAL CORRECTNESS**

**While we debate if we may evangelise Jews  
and Muslims, or have to earn the right to  
witness-millions are lost**

**The officers who responded to a 999 call  
about a drowning boy Sept. 27 2007, acted  
*correctly* by not jumping in to save him,  
because they were not trained to do so,  
and would have lost their jobs. Jordon  
died**

# **CHALLENGE TO UK CHURCH- REV. MIKE FROST**

- 'challenge to UK church to think outside its four walls and make imaginative mission its goal'**
- 'church life is predominantly organised around worship...should be organised around mission'**
- 'stop simply trying to please people in the pews and allow God's mission to shape our vision for the church'**
- 'bold enough to go to the lost rather than hoping they find us'**

# SOME ACTION STEPS

- \* Recover our passion and our nerve
- \* Co-opt younger scary people
- \* Pastors-take teams overseas
- \* Pastors-teach the basics
- \* Ensure the stranger is welcomed
- \* Those who witness-take others
- \* Investigate what others are doing
- \* Pastors-find time! 'there is always time to do the will of God'
- \* Seek to increase % of active people
- \* be 'missional' in invisible networks

# THE FINAL WORD-HUDSON TAYLOR

The first man to come to faith in China through his preaching said 'just how long has this life-giving news been known in England? Is it possible that for hundreds of years you have had the knowledge of these glad tidings in your possession, yet have only now come to preach it to us? My father sought truth for more than 20 years and died without finding it' Research by 'Sarah' now working in somewhere in Asia